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Doctor in Spite of
Himself: a Farce in Two
Acts: by Molière: Trans-
lated by Barrett H. Clark

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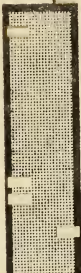
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THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, known as Molière, is the greatest writer of comedy which France has produced, and one of the great dramatists of the world. Born at Paris in 1622, educated for the law, he determined to become an actor, and, together with some associates, in 1643 built a theater which he called "L'Illustre Théâtre." After three years' unsuccessful career in Paris, Molière and his troupe disbanded, and Molière and one or two of the original company joined one of the wandering troupes which were so common at the time, and toured the provinces for many years. His first "finished" play was "L'Etourdi"—The Blunderer—which was produced at Lyons in 1653 or 1655. After the production of his second important play—"Le Dépit Amoureux"—Molière went to Paris and there, under the patronage of the King's brother, appeared before Louis XIV in 1658 in an unsuccessful production of a tragedy of Corneille. But a little comedy of Molière, which followed the tragedy, so pleased the King that the comedian was given a theater. The first important play that was produced there was "The Blunderer." This was followed by "Le Dépit Amoureux," "Les Précieuses Ridicules," "Sganarelle," "Dom Garcie de Navarre," "L'Ecole des Maris," "Les Fâcheux," "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" and "L'Ecole des Femmes." Some of his greatest

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plays—"Le Misanthrope" and "Tartufe" were produced not long after.

Molière was even in his own day considered one of the greatest contemporary actors. Favored by the King, his ideas upheld by the greatest critic of the age, Boileau, accepted by the general public, he was in every sense of the word a celebrity. On the 17th of February, 1673, he died at Paris.

"Le Médecin Malgre Lui"—"The Doctor in Spite of Himself"—was performed at Paris in 1666, at the famous Palais-Royal. The play may be considered as an interlude, a relaxation, between pieces of a more serious nature. Yet the skill and goor-humor that go to make up this quaint farce, are the work of a master. The play is still seen at frequent intervals at the Comédie Française.

"The Doctor in Spite of Himself" calls for the simplest of settings. Any set representing an opening in a wood may be used. If a change of scene is not practicable, the entrance to G ronte's home may be indicated at the side opposite to the clearing in the wood. If however a change is possible, it is better to have the second and third scenes represent a plain interior.

The costumes of Sganarelle, as woodcutter and doctor, are described in the text. The other characters wear ordinary Louis XIV costumes. Late Elizabethan costumes may however be worn in case the French ones are unobtainable.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

SGANARELLE	<i>Martine's husband</i>
MARTINE	<i>Sganarelle's wife</i>
M. ROBERT	<i>Sganarelle's neighbor</i>
VALÈRE	<i>Géronte's servant</i>
LUCAS	<i>Jacqueline's husband</i>
JACQUELINE ...	<i>Lucas' wife, and nurse in Géronte's home</i>
LUCINDE	<i>Géronte's daughter</i>
GÉRONTE	<i>A country gentleman</i>
LÉANDRE	<i>Lucinde's lover</i>

SCENE:—*A clearing in a wood.*

TIME:—*Late seventeenth century.*



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THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF

ACT I.

SCENE:—*A wood.*

(*Enter SGANARELLE and MARTINE, quarrelling.*)

SGANARELLE. No, I tell you, I will do nothing of the kind: I am master here.

MARTINE. And I tell you you shall live as I want you to. I didn't marry you to put up with your nonsense.

SGANARELLE. Oh, what a plague it is to have a wife!

MARTINE. Cursed be the day when I took it into my head to say "Yes."

SGANARELLE. Cursed be the notary who made me sign my own ruination!

MARTINE. Much right have you to complain of that! Oughtn't you rather to thank heaven all the time that you have me for a wife?

SGANARELLE. It's true you honored me too greatly. Goodness! don't make me go too far—I might tell you something——

MARTINE. Come, now, what could you say?

SGANARELLE. Enough; let us stop right here. It's enough that I know what I know, and I repeat you were very lucky to get me.

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MARTINE. What do you mean by your "very lucky to get you?" A man who will drive me into the gutter, a drunkard who eats up all I have!

SGANARELLE. Now that's a lie—I drink part of it.

MARTINE. Who sells everything in the house.

SGANARELLE. That's what I call living within one's income.

MARTINE. Who has taken away my very bed from under me!

SGANARELLE. You will get up so much the earlier.

MARTINE. Who leaves me nothing in the whole house.

SGANARELLE. There won't be so much trouble when we move.

MARTINE. Who from morning to night does nothing but eat and drink.

SGANARELLE. That's to keep me occupied.

MARTINE. And what do you think I shall do with my family in the meanwhile?

SGANARELLE. Whatever you please.

MARTINE. I have four poor little children on my hands.

SGANARELLE. Put them on the ground.

MARTINE. Who are continually begging me for bread.

SGANARELLE. Give them the rod. When I have enough to eat and drink, the family ought to be satisfied.

MARTINE. And do you mean to say, you drunkard, that—?

SGANARELLE. Gently, please.

MARTINE. I am forever to put up with your insolence and—?

SGANARELLE. Just let's keep calm, wife.

MARTINE. Who could, with you for a husband!

SGANARELLE. My dear, you know my patience is very short-lived, and my arm knows how to wield a club.

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MARTINE. I laugh at your silly threats. See, I'm not in the least afraid of you.

SGANARELLE. My better half, you desire a beating, I see.

MARTINE. You think I'm frightened at your talk!

SGANARELLE. Sweet object of my love, I shall box your ears.

MARTINE. Drunkard!

SGANARELLE. (*He beats her; she screams*)
That is the best way to make you keep still.

(*Enter M. ROBERT.*)

M. ROBERT. Here, here, here! what's this? What a disgraceful affair!

(*MARTINE comes up to him, looks him in the face, and after a short pause, deliberately slaps him.*)

MARTINE. I like to have him beat me.

M. ROBERT. Very well, then; I don't object.

MARTINE. What business is it of yours?

M. ROBERT. None whatsoever.

MARTINE. Impertinent fellow! to interfere with
a husband who is beating his wife.

M. ROBERT. I am very sorry, indeed.

MARTINE. Mind your own business.

M. ROBERT. I shall say nothing more.

MARTINE. I tell you, I wish to be beaten.

M. ROBERT. Very well, then.

MARTINE. You are a fool to interfere with other people's business.

(*M. ROBERT goes to SGANARELLE, who hits him and drives him a few feet off.*)

M. ROBERT. Neighbor, I beg your pardon. Go

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on, whack your wife as much as you please; in fact, I'll help you if you like.

SGANARELLE. I do not like.

M. ROBERT. Oh, that's a different thing.

SGANARELLE. I'll beat her if I like; and I won't beat her if I don't like.

M. ROBERT. All right; it's not my fault.

SGANARELLE. She is my wife, and not yours.

M. ROBERT. I don't doubt it in the least, Monsieur!

SGANARELLE. And you are exceedingly impudent to meddle with other people's concerns. (M. ROBERT goes out. SGANARELLE goes to his wife and takes her hand) Come, now, let's make up and be happy.

MARTINE. I won't.

SGANARELLE. What!

MARTINE. No, I won't.

SGANARELLE. Now, now.

MARTINE. I won't do anything of the kind.

SGANARELLE. Come, come, come.

MARTINE. No, I *will* be angry.

SGANARELLE. Come, now; it's only a trifle.

MARTINE. Let me be, I tell you!

SGANARELLE. I ask your forgiveness.

MARTINE. Well, I forgive you this time. (*Aside*) But you will pay for it.

SGANARELLE. Oh, it's nothing. A little beating now and then between those who truly love only increases affection. There now, I'm going to the forest, and I promise you more than a hundred fag-gots to-day. (*He goes out*)

MARTINE. I shan't forget what I owe him for that beating. I'll get him a beating he won't soon forget. (*She retires to the rear of the stage, apparently planning*)

(*Enter VALÈRE and LUCAS.*)

LUCAS. I'll be cursed if we haven't the devil

of an errand; I don't know neither, what I'll get out of it.

VALÈRE. What do you want us to do? We must do as our master tells us; besides, our mistress's health concerns us; because her wedding, that's delayed because of her strange malady, may prove a windfall for us. That Cléante, who wants to marry her, seems likely to get her, though I've noticed she has some liking for Léandre. Of course, her father would never have *him* for his son-in-law.

LUCAS. What has he got into his head, I wonder? How do we know where to find a doctor for our mistress?

VALÈRE. We have only to look, and I feel sure our efforts will be rewarded——

(MARTINE, *who has been talking to herself at the back of the stage, is heard to say:*)

MARTINE. Yes: I must give it to him. I can't get over that beating he gave me. (*She inadvertently bumps into LUCAS and VALÈRE*) Ah, Messieurs, I beg your pardon. I didn't see you, as I was racking my brains over something that troubles me.

VALÈRE. Everyone has his troubles here on earth; we too are looking for something.

MARTINE. Is it something in which I might help you?

VALÈRE. Perhaps. We are looking for a skilful physician, one who could cure our master's daughter. She was stricken dumb a short time ago. Several doctors have employed their utmost knowledge and profoundest skill, but in vain.

MARTINE. Ah, Messieurs, you could not possibly have found one better fitted than your humble servant: I know of a wonderful man, just the one you are looking for.

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VALÈRE. Good! Where is he?

MARTINE. You will find him there, chopping wood and making faggots for amusement.

LUCAS. A physician chopping wood!

VALÈRE. Impossible!

MARTINE. Nothing's impossible. He is an odd fellow who pleases himself that way; a peculiar, eccentric man. You would never in the world take him for a doctor. He goes around dressed like a woodsman, pretends to be ignorant, and heartily dislikes using his wonderful skill as a physician.

VALÈRE. It's very strange that all men of genius are slightly off, so to speak.

MARTINE. Oh, he's madder than you'd think; for sometimes he has to be beaten before he will confess that he's a doctor at all. We have to beat him whenever anyone's sick.

LUCAS. How strange!

MARTINE. Quite true, but when he has finally confessed, he does wonderful things.

VALÈRE. What's his name?

MARTINE. Sganarelle. He is a man with a long black beard, wears a ruff, and a yellow and green coat.

LUCAS. A yellow and green coat?

VALÈRE. But can he really work such wonders as you say?

MARTINE. Miracles! Six months ago, a woman was given up for dead and was about to be buried. This Sganarelle was brought, after a severe beating, and put a drop of some magical liquid into the poor woman's mouth, after which she rose and walked about just as if nothing had happened.

LUCAS. Wonderful! He must have some magic cure.

MARTINE. No doubt at all.

LUCAS. Well, he's the very man we want. We'll find him at once.

VALÈRE. We are very much obliged to you, Madame.

MARTINE. Pray, don't mention it. But don't forget what I said about that beating, for I am very anxious to have you succeed.

LUCAS. Just you leave us alone on that score, my fine lady. If it's only a beatin' he wants, I'll serve him!

VALÈRE. Ah, Lucas, we are very lucky indeed. This is a find. (*VALÈRE and LUCAS retire to the back of the stage, and converse in an undertone*)

(*Enter SGANARELLE, with a bottle, singing.*)

VALÈRE. Hush-sh-sh. I hear someone singing, and I just heard the chopping of wood.

SGANARELLE. (*Laying down his bottle, and stretching out his arms, after yawning:*) Well, this is hard work! Time for a bit of comforting spirits. (*He drinks from the bottle, and then sings:*)

“What comfort is there more on earth
Than thou, Oh bottle brown,
Thou rousest all mankind to mirth,
And dost dispel the frown.”

Ah, a little of the bottle now and then, to chase away black melancholy.

VALÈRE. That's the fellow, I do believe.

LUCAS. I think you're right, Valère.

VALÈRE. Let's come nearer!

SGANARELLE. (*Aside*) What the deuce do these people want, anyway?

VALÈRE. I'm sure he's the one.

SGANARELLE. (*He puts the bottle on the ground, but seeing VALÈRE approach, picks it up and puts it on the opposite side; but seeing LUCAS approach from the other, he takes it up and hugs it*) What in the world can they mean?

VALÈRE. Monsieur, isn't your name Sganarelle?

SGANARELLE. (*To VALÈRE*) Yes, (*To LUCAS*) and No. It depends on what you want with Sganarelle.

VALÈRE. We don't want anything except to offer him our best regards.

SGANARELLE. Well, then—my name is Sganarelle.

VALÈRE. Delighted to meet you, Monsieur. We have been recommended to you for a service we are in great need of. We have come to beg your assistance.

SGANARELLE. Messieurs, if it is anything about my business, I am entirely at your service.

VALÈRE. You are too kind, Monsieur. Skilful people are much in demand, and we have been told of your wonderful cures——

SGANARELLE. Ah, you flatter me, though, without bragging, I must confess that I'm the best in the world at faggot-making.

VALÈRE. No doubt, Monsieur.—

SGANARELLE. I never give short measure—I do my work in a——

VALÈRE. That is not the reason we came to see you. We have——

SGANARELLE. And I sell them at ten sous the hundred.

VALÈRE. Let's drop that subject, if you please.

SGANARELLE. I declare, I can't afford to sell them cheaper. As it is, I only——

VALÈRE. We know that, Monsieur, but we——

SGANARELLE. If you know that, then you know that I am honest and upright in my dealings——

VALÈRE. You are joking, Monsieur——

SGANARELLE. I am not: I can't make them for less.

VALÈRE. Pray, Monsieur, let's change the subject.

SGANARELLE. You can get someone else to make your faggots for you—I tell you I can't——

VALÈRE. Ah, Monsieur, let's not go on in this way.

SGANARELLE. I swear to you I can't make them for a sou less.

VALÈRE. Come, come!

SGANARELLE. I tell you, it's impossible to get them for less. And I don't overcharge——

VALÈRE. Ought so great a doctor as you to wish to hide his great ability from the world—?

SGANARELLE. (*Aside*) He's crazy.

VALÈRE. Now, now, don't try to make me believe——

SGANARELLE. What do you mean, Monsieur?

LUCAS. Come, this is all nonsense—I know what I know.

SGANARELLE. What is it then? Whom do you think I am?

VALÈRE. Just what you are: a great doctor.

SGANARELLE. Doctor yourself. I'm not one, never was, and never hope to be.

VALÈRE. (*Aside*) Now he's got it! (*To SGANARELLE*) Don't pretend any longer, Monsieur, and please don't force us to take extreme measures.

SGANARELLE. How's that?

VALÈRE. Oh, something we should not like to do.

SGANARELLE. Lord! Do whatever you like. I'm no doctor and I don't understand a word you are saying.

VALÈRE. Once more, Monsieur, I beg you to confess that you're a doctor.

SGANARELLE. Why, I'm only a common woodman. Do you wish to drive me crazy?

VALÈRE. Why do you persist in lying?

SGANARELLE. What's the use of my telling you a thousand times: I am no doctor?

VALÈRE. You are not a doctor?

SGANARELLE. No, I tell you.

VALÈRE. So be it, then.

(*They beat him severely.*)

SGANARELLE. Stop, stop! Messieurs, I'll be anything you wish.

VALÈRE. That's better, now. But why did you force us to do this, Monsieur? I assure you I regret it very much.

SGANARELLE. What the devil? For Heaven's sake, are you joking, or are you both out of your heads? Do you say I am a—you're mad—a doctor?

VALÈRE. What! you don't admit it yet? You still deny that you're a doctor?

SGANARELLE. Plague take me if I am!

LUCAS. Ain't you a doctor, then?

SGANARELLE. No, I tell you. (*They beat him again*) Oh, oh! well, since you *will* have it so, I *am* a doctor—an apothecary, too, if you wish it. I'll agree to anything rather than be beaten again.

VALÈRE. Very well, Monsieur, I'm pleased to see you so reasonable. I ask your pardon with all my heart and soul, Monsieur.

SGANARELLE. (*Aside*) Why, bless me, have I really become a doctor without knowing it?

VALÈRE. You shall have no cause to regret anything, Monsieur. You shall be satisfied.

SGANARELLE. But tell me, are you quite sure you're not mistaken? Are you sure I'm a real doctor?

LUCAS. Undoubtedly.

SGANARELLE. Really?

VALÈRE. Assuredly.

SGANARELLE. Deuce take me if I knew it!

VALÈRE. Why, you are the greatest doctor in the world.

SGANARELLE. Indeed!

LUCAS. A doctor who has done innumerable cures.

SGANARELLE. The devil!

VALÈRE. In short, Monsieur, you will be satisfied, and will be paid any fee you wish, if you will let us take you with us.

SGANARELLE. I shall receive any fees I wish?

VALÈRE. Yes.

SGANARELLE. Well, in that case, I certainly am a doctor. I must have forgotten it; but now I remember. Where do I go?

VALÈRE. We will take you; it is to a young girl who has lost her speech.

SGANARELLE. Well, I haven't found it.

VALÈRE. Come, Monsieur.

SGANARELLE. Here, Monsieur, you carry this bottle. I—I—a—a—keep my medicine in it. (*They go out*)

ACT II.

SCENE:—*Before GÉRONTE's house.*

(*Enter GÉRONTE, VALÈRE, LUCAS, JACQUELINE.*)

VALÈRE. Yes, Monsieur, I'm sure you will be satisfied; we have brought you the most illustrious doctor in the world.

LUCAS. He has mended folks that's dead; that's what he's done.

VALÈRE. He is rather peculiar, as I said. Lucas says that he has a screw loose somewhere.

LUCAS. Yes, that's what I said.

VALÈRE. But really, this is only a pretence to conceal his real learning.

GÉRONTE. I should like very much to see him; send for him at once.

VALÈRE. Very well. (*He goes out*)

JACQUELINE. You can take my word for it, Monsieur, this doctor'll be just like the rest of them. I just tell you that a husband to her liking is the only cure for her.

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GÉRONTE. Come, now, you do a lot of meddling, nurse.

JACQUELINE. Just the same, it's a husband she wants, it is.

GÉRONTE. Who would take her as she is now? I offered to make Louis her husband, but she refused.

JACQUELINE. And no wonder; you wanted to give her to a man she didn't like. Why don't you give her to Léandre? She likes him.

GÉRONTE. I don't like Léandre; he has no money; Louis has.

JACQUELINE. Ah, parents nowadays always ask: "How much has he?" What's the use of anything, if you can't be happy, I say—?

GÉRONTE. Will you keep still, for goodness' sake?

(*Enter VALÈRE and SGANARELLE.*)

VALÈRE. Here comes the doctor, Monsieur.

GÉRONTE. I am delighted to see you, Monsieur. We have great need of you.

SGANARELLE. (*In a black gown and high hat*) Hippocrates says—that both of us should put on our hats.

GÉRONTE. Hippocrates says that?

SGANARELLE. Yes.

GÉRONTE. In what chapter does he say that?

SGANARELLE. In his chapter—on hats.

GÉRONTE. Well, if Hippocrates says so, it must be.

SGANARELLE. Well, doctor, since I have——

GÉRONTE. Whom are you speaking to, Monsieur?

SGANARELLE. To you.

GÉRONTE. I am not a doctor.

SGANARELLE. What, you are not a doctor?

GÉRONTE. Certainly not.

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SGANARELLE. (*Beating him*) Really?

GÉRONTE. Oh, oh,—Really. I tell you I am no doctor.

SGANARELLE. *Now* you are a doctor. I have no other degree than you have.

GÉRONTE. What sort of fellow is this you have brought me!

VALÈRE. Didn't I tell you he was rather eccentric?

GÉRONTE. Yes; but I don't like his eccentricities.

VALÈRE. Never mind, Monsieur, he was only joking.

GÉRONTE. Well, I don't like his kind of joking.

SGANARELLE. Pardon me for the liberty I have taken. I am very sorry——

GÉRONTE. Don't say any more about it. I have a daughter who was stricken with a strange disease.

SGANARELLE. I am delighted to know it, I can assure you.

GÉRONTE. Many thanks.

SGANARELLE. What is your daughter's name?

GÉRONTE. Lucinde.

SGANARELLE. Lucinde? A nice name!

GÉRONTE. I shall go and see what she is doing.
(*He goes out*)

SGANARELLE. An interesting case, upon my word.—Ha! someone is coming. (*Walks up and down a moment; then—*)

(*Enter GÉRONTE, leading LUCINDE.*)

GÉRONTE. Here is my daughter.

SGANARELLE. Is this the patient?

GÉRONTE. Yes: my only child. I should always regret it if anything were to happen to her. If she should die——

SGANARELLE. Impossible, sir. She must not die without a regular prescription from the Academy.

GÉRONTE. Bring a chair, there. (*A chair is brought*)

SGANARELLE. Not so bad, this patient!

GÉRONTE. She smiles, Monsieur; you have made her smile.

SGANARELLE. Of course, Monsieur, it's my business. This is fine. It is a very good symptom. Well, Mademoiselle, what ails you? What are your pains?

LUCINDE. (*Making various gesticulations*)
Ouh, oi, oi!

SGANARELLE. What's that?

LUCINDE. Oi, oi, (*Etc.*)

SGANARELLE. Ouh, ouh, oi, oi, I don't understand your deuced language.

GÉRONTE. That's just what's the matter, Monsieur. She is dumb, and therefore I was compelled to put off the marriage.

SGANARELLE. Why was that?

GÉRONTE. The man she is to marry wants to wait for her to get better.

SGANARELLE. Show me the man who doesn't want his wife dumb! I only wish mine had that disease! I should see that she wasn't soon cured!

GÉRONTE. Well, cure this case, at any rate.

SGANARELLE. Don't worry, Monsieur. Is her pain very acute?

GÉRONTE. Yes—very.

SGANARELLE. That's right. (*To LUCINDE*) Let me feel your pulse. Monsieur, (*To GÉRONTE*) I am enlightened as to your daughter's condition: she is dumb!

GÉRONTE. Yes; that's just what's the matter with her. You have found it out immediately.

SGANARELLE. Of course! We great doctors know things at once. A fool would have been disturbed and puzzled, and would have beat about the bush. But I tell you plainly: your daughter is dumb.

GÉRONTE. Yes; but how did it happen?

SGANARELLE. Very simple: she lost her speech.

GÉRONTE. Very good; but why?

SGANARELLE. Our best authorities seem to agree that it arises from an impediment of the tongue.

GÉRONTE. Yes, but tell me the causes. The authorities must surely——

SGANARELLE. Well, Aristotle says—many fine things.

GÉRONTE. I can readily believe it.

SGANARELLE. He was a great man.

GÉRONTE. No doubt of it.

SGANARELLE. A *very* great man; a man who was far greater than I am. But, to return to the question: I am of the opinion that this impediment arises from some certain peccant humors. Peccant—that is to say—a—a—peccant. For, as the vapors exhumed and formed by a certain exhalation of circuitous—a—you understand Latin?

GÉRONTE. No.

SGANARELLE. What, you don't understand Latin?

GÉRONTE. No.

SGANARELLE. Carborias influxoriorum arcithrumbi thantrat, etc., etc.

GÉRONTE. Ah, why didn't I study when I was young?

SGANARELLE. So these vapors, passing from the left to the right side, come into contact with the lungs—Latin armyan—Hebrew, polyglum—and from there they proceed immediately to the—please follow me more closely.

GÉRONTE. I am.

SGANARELLE. ——have a certain malignity by a— pay attention to me.

GÉRONTE. I am, monsieur.

SGANARELLE. Which is always caused by the sharpness of these, and the concavity of the dia-

phragm—nequaquam in uterque imibus—and therefore your daughter is dumb.

GÉRONTE. No one could possibly argue better. But, Monsieur, what do you think should be done?

SGANARELLE. What do I think should be done?

GÉRONTE. Yes.

SGANARELLE. Well, I should suggest that she be put immediately to bed, and take plenty of bread and wine.

GÉRONTE. Why, if you please?

SGANARELLE. Because this wonderful combination often produces speech.

GÉRONTE. What a great man you are! Quick, bring some bread and wine!

SGANARELLE. I shall soon return to see how the patient is getting on. I wish you good-day.

GÉRONTE. One moment please.

SGANARELLE. What do you want?

GÉRONTE. To give you your fee.

SGANARELLE. (*Holding out his hand*) I shall not take it.

GÉRONTE. Ah, Monsieur.

SGANARELLE. Not at all.

GÉRONTE. I beg of you—

SGANARELLE. I will not—I do not practise for money.

GÉRONTE. I'm quite sure of *that*.

SGANARELLE. (*Taking the money*) Is it full weight?

GÉRONTE. Certainly.

SGANARELLE. I am not a mercenary doctor.

GÉRONTE. I can readily believe it.

SGANARELLE. I am not inspired by any base motive for gold. No, not at all.

GÉRONTE. I don't doubt it in the least. Well, I bid you good-day.

SGANARELLE. Good-day, Monsieur. Never forget. I never practise for money.

(GÉRONTE goes out. Enter LÉANDRE.)

SGANARELLE. Well, this isn't so bad after all——

LÉANDRE. I beg your pardon, Monsieur—I wish some help—I am——

SGANARELLE. (*Goes up to him and feels his pulse*) Your pulse is very bad. You have a severe case of——

LÉANDRE. I'm not sick, Monsieur; it isn't *that* I came to see you about.

SGANARELLE. If you are not sick, why the deuce do you not say so? How am I to know?

LÉANDRE. My name is Léandre. I love Lucinde, and want you to help me to see her, as I am forbidden to enter her home. I have a little plan in which you can help me, and upon which my life and happiness depend.

SGANARELLE. Why, what do you take me for? Do you think doctors should lower their dignity by dabbling in love affairs?

LÉANDRE. You needn't make so much noise, though!

SGANARELLE. I shall make so much noise as I please, you impudent scoundrel!

LÉANDRE. Gently, gently, Monsieur!

SGANARELLE. Puppy!

LÉANDRE. Oh, I beseech you!

SGANARELLE. I'll teach you not to insult one of my rank and——

LÉANDRE. (*Giving him a purse*) Please, Monsieur, accept——

SGANARELLE. Well, this is—I was not speaking of you—of course not—the idea! You are a gentleman, and I am your most obedient servant. I was saying that there are some impudent puppies in the world that think they can insult me; and I can't help getting angry at them.

LÉANDRE. I beg your pardon, Monsieur, for the liberty——

24 THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

SGANARELLE. Don't say another word. What is the business in hand, now?

LÉANDRE. I must tell you, Monsieur, that Lucinde's malady is a mere trick. The doctors don't know a thing about it. I tell you, love's the cause. She has pretended this illness to escape that odious marriage with Louis. Come with me, please, and I shall tell you all about it on the way.

SGANARELLE. Very well, Monsieur. You have interested me so much in your affair that I promise you the patient shall either be yours or die.

(They go out and return a moment later, LÉANDRE disguised as an apothecary.)

LÉANDRE. I don't think I make a very bad apothecary! I shall deceive her father without any trouble.

SGANARELLE. No doubt at all.

LÉANDRE. Only I wish I knew five or six long Latin words to mix with my conversation. Then I should be a learned man.

SGANARELLE. Nonsense; it's not necessary. The dress is sufficient. I don't know any more about medicine than you do.

LÉANDRE. How's that?

SGANARELLE. Deuce take me if I know a thing about it. I shall confide in you, Monsieur.

LÉANDRE. What! you're not really——

SGANARELLE. Of course not. They made me a doctor. I don't know anything, I tell you. I left school at the end of the sixth form. But now I'm a doctor. A shoemaker who spoils a pair of shoes is blamed for it. But when we doctors make a slip, their dead patients never blame them. They can never tell what medicine killed them. Here come some people who want to be cured. Let's give them the slip. Go and wait for me near Lucinde's home. *(LÉANDRE goes out. Enter JACQUELINE and*

LUCAS) Here is a monster nurse! Ah, nurse of my heart, I am charmed to meet you; the sight of you is like cassia, rhubarb and senna to me, and when you——

JACQUELINE. Gracious me, Mr. Doctor, it's no use talkin' to me that way. I don't understand a single word of your Latin.

SGANARELLE. It is not necessary for one to know Latin nowadays. Who's this? (*Hides*)

(*Enter GÉRONTE.*)

GÉRONTE. Lucas, have you seen our doctor lately?

LUCAS. Yes, Monsieur, I've seen him.

GÉRONTE. Where is he?

LUCAS. I don't know.

GÉRONTE. Go and see what my daughter is doing. (LUCAS *goes out.* *Enter* SGANARELLE and LÉANDRE) Ah, Monsieur, I was looking for you.

SGANARELLE. Well, I was coming. How is the patient?

GÉRONTE. She is somewhat worse since taking your remedy.

SGANARELLE. So much the better; she is going to be cured.

GÉRONTE. Yes, but I think she will choke before she is cured.

SGANARELLE. Don't be anxious about her. I have some further remedies for the last moment.

GÉRONTE. Who is that man with you?

SGANARELLE. He is an apothecary.

GÉRONTE. Ah, I see.

SGANARELLE. Your daughter will need him, I feel sure.

(*Enter* JACQUELINE and LUCINDE.)

JACQUELINE. Here is your daughter, master; she wished to walk about a little.

SGANARELLE. That is the best thing for her. Feel her pulse, Apothecary, I shall consult about further measures. (*He draws GÉRONTE over to the opposite side of the stage and turns him away from LUCINDE and LÉANDRE. Each time GÉRONTE starts to turn round, SGANARELLE prevents him*) Monsieur, it is a grave question—among us doctors—For Monsieur, as I said before, I think it highly probable that—with the inequality of such peccant

(LUCINDE is heard muttering.)

GÉRONTE. Listen! my daughter spoke! Oh, great doctor, excellent doctor! What miracles you can perform! How can I ever repay you for the great service you have done me!

SGANARELLE. (*Strutting about and stroking his beard*) Hem! hem! This has been a very troublesome case for me, indeed.

LUCINDE. Yes, Father, I have recovered my speech, but only to tell you that I will marry no one but Léandre, and that it is useless to try to force me to accept Louis——

GÉRONTE. But I shall——

LUCINDE. Nothing can shake my resolution.

GÉRONTE. What is this? Am I to——?

LUCINDE. All your arguments are useless.

GÉRONTE. But I will force you to marry him, and if you——

LUCINDE. I will not submit to such tyranny. No, no, no! (*She says this last in a shrill and piercing voice*)

GÉRONTE. My, oh, my! Oh, doctor, I beseech you to make her dumb again! My fortune will be your pay for it.

SGANARELLE. My utmost skill can but make you deaf, which is some consolation——

GÉRONTE. Many thanks! (*To LUCINDE*) And

as for you, you will marry Louis this very evening.

LUCINDE. I would sooner die!

SGANARELLE. Stop this wrangling at once. I know a remedy that will cure her.

GÉRONTE. Is it possible?

SGANARELLE. Certainly. Just let me arrange it. I shall need the apothecary. (*To LÉANDRE, aside*) One word, Monsieur. The only remedy I know of in this case is one matrimonium pill. You must persuade her to take the medicine at once. Give her also a dose of elopement. Go into the garden now and persuade her to take these remedies. I shall speak with her father in the meanwhile. (*LUCINDE and LÉANDRE go out*)

GÉRONTE. What are those drugs you just mentioned, Monsieur? I don't think I ever heard of them before.

SGANARELLE. They are used in extreme cases.

GÉRONTE. Did you ever see such impudence?

SGANARELLE. Indeed, never.

GÉRONTE. I think she is just the kind of girl who would elope with him.

SGANARELLE. You don't believe that?

GÉRONTE. I shall take good care that they shall not see each other.

SGANARELLE. Believe me, that is a very prudent step.

(*Enter LUCAS.*)

LUCAS. Oh, Master, here's a pretty mess. Your daughter's run away with her Léandre! It was him as played the 'pothecary, and this is the doctor that gave the remedy.

GÉRONTE. What! Abuse me in this shameful manner! Quick! fetch the police. Here, you hold this rascal! (*GÉRONTE goes out*)

LUCAS. (*Collaring SGANARELLE*) Take my word for it, you'll hang for this!

(Enter MARTINE.)

MARTINE. Goodness me! What's become of that doctor I recommended to you?

LUCAS. Here he is. He's just going to be hanged.

MARTINE. My husband hanged! Why?

LUCAS. He helped someone elope with the Master's daughter.

MARTINE. Alas, my dear husband, are you going to be hanged?

SGANARELLE. Don't you see? What can I do?

MARTINE. Unhappy me! If you had only finished chopping the wood, there might have been some consolation!

SGANARELLE. Go away, you grieve me.

MARTINE. No, no, I shall stay and encourage you to die; I'll not leave you until I see you hanged.

SGANARELLE. Thanks, my dear wife.

(Enter GÉRONTE.)

GÉRONTE. The police officer will soon be here and you will be behind the bars.

SGANARELLE. Ah, my dear Monsieur, (*Bowing and taking off his hat*) wouldn't a few blows from that stick be sufficient to allay your wrath?

GÉRONTE. No, it is a matter of law.—But what's this?

(Enter LÉANDRE, LUCINDE, JACQUELINE and LUCAS.)

LÉANDRE. I appear now as Léandre, and bring you back your daughter. We intended to elope and marry. But I shall not steal your daughter; I shall only receive her from your own hands.—I *also* wish to let you know that I have just received word of the death of my uncle, who has left me heir to a large fortune and——

GÉRONTE. A large—? Ah, my son, your virtue is of the highest importance! I give you my daughter with the greatest of pleasure.

MARTINE. Since you are not going to be hanged, thank me for making you a doctor; I gained you that honor.

SGANARELLE. And also the honor of a severe thrashing. But come, I forgive you this time.

CURTAIN.

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